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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [LE](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: TFLE01: ANGER SIMMERS AS WAR CONTINUES

ABU DHABI 3163 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

Classified by CDA Martin Quinn, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary and comment: The misery and daily tally of Lebanese casualties continue to dominate public discourse in the UAE. U.S. policy is increasingly seen as complicit in Israeli aggressions, and the draft UN resolution has thus far not been welcomed as part of a balanced solution. Members of the Crown Prince's staff note the "very difficult" balance the UAEG must strike as public angst increases and the image of a key partner, the U.S., continues to take a public beating. UAE-sponsored humanitarian efforts in Lebanon can defray public anger only so far as it seeks to avoid having its relationship with the U.S. turn into a liability. End summary and comment.

¶2. (SBU) As UAE newspapers tally the Lebanese death toll as passing 1,000, public angst about the war continues to grow. Openly critical of the draft UNSCR, which the media suggests "rewards Israel" politically for what it has been unable to achieve militarily, local editorials continue to reflect public frustration with Israeli aggression and U.S. policies seen to support that aggression (a step beyond previous characterizations of the U.S. "condoning" Israeli actions). The Secretary's references to a "new Middle East" are often characterized as U.S. efforts to redefine the region through the crucible of conflict -- as if Tel Aviv's tactics were choreographed elements of Washington's strategy for the entire region. In the background of news on Lebanon, Israel is also seen to be getting away with increased suppression of the Palestinians.

¶3. (SBU) The UAE leadership, often exhibiting the instincts of politicians seeking public support, continue to reach out to those suffering from the conflict. Dubai ruler Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MbR) is credited, for example, with responding to the plea of one national whose Egyptian mother was trapped in the war zone. The family's reunion made local headlines highlighting gratitude for the Ruler's benevolence. MbR has also ordered a number of relief flights to ferry humanitarian goods to Lebanon. Abu Dhabi's leadership also continues to bolster its humanitarian image by receiving victims in the UAE for medical care (reftel -- some Lebanese patients are being transported here at UAEG expense and treated at Sheikh Zayed Military Hospital near the Embassy). The UAEG is also continuing the air bridge established at the request of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ). Official UAE websites claim 500 tons of relief materials transported on 19 flights as well as a ship soon to sail with 2,500 tons of relief and medical supplies coordinated by the quasi-official Red Crescent Society.

¶4. (SBU) The media has not ignored Israeli casualties, which are tallied alongside Lebanese fatalities. August 7 dailies (English and Arabic-language press) front-paged an AFP photo of dead IDF soldiers (covered in blankets). One headline even noted that "Israelis are also dying."

15. (C) The Crown Prince's Head of Protocol, Mohammed Al-Junaibi, told PolOff August 7 that the crisis in Lebanon is "bothering everyone" and that a previous sense among UAE nationals that the U.S. was somehow complicit in Israeli actions has evolved into more direct condemnation of the U.S. right along with Israel. He said no one expected a solution emanating from the UN, which many consider a "corrupt" organization without teeth, but that all looked to the U.S. for solutions -- and by extension blamed the U.S. for permitting the problem to continue.

16. (C) International Affairs Director for the Crown Prince Yousef Al-Otaiba took a serious, even somber tone as he told the Charge August 5 that Lebanon -- and particularly Arab public perceptions of the American position on Lebanon -- was "getting to be very difficult for us." He reiterated that the UAE leadership disliked Hezbollah and its fanatic counterparts and would prefer to see them gone. The current conflict, however, with its destruction of Lebanese infrastructure and killing of civilians, was turning Hezbollah into popular heroes of the resistance.

17. (C) Comment: As the crisis moves into its 27th day, the UAEG may feel backed into a corner. The UAE public condemns Israeli actions and perceived U.S. approval and support. With the U.S. thus directly implicated, a key friend and ally in the Gulf feels squeezed by public emotions and potential condemnation for its own partnership with us. UAEG-coordinated humanitarian missions help defray some public anger and offer a constructive outlet for local angst about the crisis. Time, however, may work against the UAEG goal of avoiding direct condemnation for its close ties with the U.S. End comment.
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